

## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

### JULY 18, 2023 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

Commissioners Present: M. Hodgson, J. Caveney, A.J. DeRosa, R. Green, B. Temple, E. Stohl, S. Price, J. Titone, M. Lachance, C. Hodgdon.

Commissioners absent/excused: P. DeBow

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman E. Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1.) Commissioner R. Green moved to approve the June 20, 2023 Commission Minutes as written and Commissioner S. Price seconded. The motion carried with 9 in favor, 1 abstention (M. Lachance, absent from the June 20, 2023 Commission Meeting).

Consent Agenda – The following items were listed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. Commission members may remove certain items, if further public input or discussion is necessary.

Commissioner R. Green moved to accept consent agenda items 2a – 2e, as presented below, and Commissioner C. Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$25.00 from Bert & Georgette Beaudette, made to the Law Enforcement Division, in appreciation of Conservation Officer Cole LeTourneau's efforts in removing a deceased opossum from their property. This donation will be utilized to purchase additional supplies to deal with removing deceased animals safely.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$60.00 made to the "Let's Go Fishing" Program in memory of Raymond Angers from Michele Angers & Thomas Dooley, Contocook, NH.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$200.00 made to the Hunter Education Program in memory of Scott B. Whittier from David & Mary Ahern, Bradford, MA.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from Michael Boyd, Tiverton, RI, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2e.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$75.00 made in memory of Daniel Sheehy of Rochester, NH, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

- Robert Bavicchi – Dover, NH - \$50.00
  - Thomas & Ann Hardiman – Dover, NH - \$25.00
- Total: \$75.00

3.) The Commission had discussion regarding the request to accept the donation of the Mooney Clarke Boat Access Area on the Pemigewasset River in Bristol, NH, from the Central Rivers Power (CRP, LLC) Company, valued at approximately \$89,400.

Garret Graaskamp, Boat Access Coordinator, was on vacation, therefore, not present at the meeting to answer questions relative to the donation.

Commissioner R. Green moved to make this an action item and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded.

Commissioner M. Hodgson stated that she would like to see the full presentation for this donation next month prior to voting. She recommended that the Resources & Infrastructure Committee visit the site and provide a report to the full Commission.

It was determined that a vote to make this an action item was not required, as this was already an action item, therefore, Commissioner R. Green withdrew his motion and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa withdrew his second.

At this time, Commissioner R. Green moved to accept the donation of the Mooney Clarke Boat Access Area on the Pemigewasset River in Bristol, NH, from the Central Rivers Power (CRP, LLC) Company, valued at approximately \$89,400 and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded.

Commissioner M. Hodgson stated that she believes in consistency and reminded the Commission that they had discussion for two consecutive meetings regarding the Success Pond donation prior to voting.

Commissioner J. Caveney stated that he would like an opportunity to view the site prior to voting. He further stated that he would like to verify whether any title research was performed to confirm that there are no strings attached, and would like to view the deed language, as well.

Commissioner B. Temple agreed that he would also like the opportunity to view the site prior to voting.

Commissioner M. Lachance reported that he has been to this site many times and finds the site to be well maintained, and stated that he felt it would make a great addition to the department's boat ramps.

Commissioner R. Green reminded the Commission that one of their duties is to provide access to constituents. He further reminded the Commission that the department spends money on ramp rentals, as well.

Commissioner M. Hodgson reported that she would like to see the package of information that would be submitted to The Governor & Council for their approval regarding this donation.

Director Mason responded that it could be six months out before that paperwork is prepared.

The vote on the above motion to accept the donation of the Mooney Clarke Boat Access Area on the Pemigewasset River in Bristol, NH, from the Central Rivers Power (CRP, LLC) Company, valued at approximately \$89,400, failed with 4 in favor, 5 opposed (Commissioners: S. Price, C. Hodgdon, J. Caveney, B. Temple & M. Hodgson).

At this time, Commissioner S. Price moved to table this item until the next meeting, making it a future action item of the Commission, and Commissioner C. Hodgdon seconded.

The motion carried with 5 in favor, 4 opposed (Commissioners: A.J. DeRosa, M. Lachance, R. Green & J. Titone).

Chairman E. Stohl requested that in the future more information be provided to the Commission on action items prior to the day of the Commission Meeting.

4.) Commissioner B. Temple moved to accept six prize donations listed below, generously donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company, Woodman Arms, Prime Archery, Morse Sporting Goods, The Ruffed Grouse Society, and the NH Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, for use in the following surveys and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded:

**2022 Deer Hunter Mail Survey (2 prizes)**

- Ruger American Rifle with Vortex Crossfire II Riflescope (Model #16934), valued at \$799.00, generously donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company.
- Woodman Arms Patriot Muzzleloader valued at \$879.00, generously donated by Woodman Arms, Freemont, NH.

**2022 Bow Hunter Survey (1 prize)**

- Prime Compound bow valued at \$1,099.00, generously donated by Prime Archery & Morse Sporting Goods of Hillsboro, NH.

**2022-23 Small Game Hunter Survey (1 prize)**

- Ruger American Rifle with Vortex Crossfire II Rifle Scope (Model #16931), valued at \$799.00, generously donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company.

**2022 Ruffed Grouse Wing and Tail Survey (1 prize)**

- Charles Daley 601 12-gauge shotgun valued at \$309.00, generously donated by The Ruffed Grouse Society.

**2023 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (1 prize)**

- Mossberg Maverick 88 12-gauge shotgun valued at \$293.00, generously donated by NH Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reported that there would be no Financial Statement provided this month due to it being the year end closing. She reported that she would have a report next month.
- 2.) Colonel Jordan reported that due to extenuating circumstances, the K-9 presentation would take place at a future Commission Meeting.

At this time, Colonel Jordan introduced two new Conservation Officers that were sworn-in on Friday, July 14, 2023, Eva Golden and Griffin McKeown. Colonel Jordan stated, “They were the two top candidates, and we are very happy to have them here.”

Discussion took place relative to future presentations. Chairman Stohl read aloud the below list of recommended presentations:

**Fish & Game Commission Recommendations for Presentations at Commission Meetings**

- Forestry Management.
- Upland Game Bird Management.
- Current Deer Populations in the state and what that means for management.
- Impacts of climate change & planning on our natural resources.
- Planning for Infrastructure improvements (boat access improvements, capital improvement plan for our buildings & facilities, “executive” report for the Powder Mill engineering and improvements).
- Long-range goals and objectives.
- A.O.T. (Alteration of Terrain Permits).

Commissioner M. Hodgson reported that the Commission postponed the Offshore Wind Farm Presentation in order to address rulemaking and recommended it be included back onto the presentation list, in addition to the follow up presentation on coyote management.

The presentation list for the August, September & October Commission Meetings is as follows:

- August 15, 2023 – Fisheries Habitat Account Presentation. (J. Magee)
- September 12, 2023– Offshore Wind Presentation. (C. Patterson)
- October 17, 2023– Coyote Management Follow-Up Presentation. (Wildlife Staff)

Commissioner R. Green moved that an Alteration of Terrain presentation be provided to the Commission at the November 21, 2023 Commission Meeting and Commissioner M. Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

- November – Alternation of Terrain Presentation. (Wildlife/Nongame Staff)

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa moved that a Climate Change & Impacts on the Department's Mission be provided at the December 19, 2023 Commission Meeting and Commissioner R. Green seconded.

Discussion took place relative to having periodic updates & discussion on this instead of a presentation, as it is very complex and always changing.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa withdrew his motion and Commissioner R. Green withdrew his second.

At this time, Commissioner C. Hodgdon moved that the Business Division provide a presentation at the December 19, 2023 Commission Meeting on License sales & trends they are seeing, in addition to providing information on what other states are doing to promote license sales, and Commissioner J. Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner J. Titone reported that there is some concern over the number of lobsters contracting shell disease, which he suspects is an environmental issue. He reported that it makes the shell extremely soft and easily punctured. He reported that he was not sure what future impacts this would have on lobsters, as it was early in discussions.

**COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:**  
**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:**

Public policy development & recommendations, as well as Commission advocacy before legislature.

**Commissioner Price, Chair;** Commissioners: Caveney, DeBow, Hodgson & Stohl.  
**Staff members:** Kevin Jordan & Marty Mobley.

Commissioner S. Price reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and reviewed retained bills.

She further reported that the committee recommends a change of no position to oppose on HB-650-FN, *relative to prohibiting the suspension of driver's licenses due to nonpayment of fines or fees*, as it conflicts with SB-13, *relative to the recovery of search and rescue expenses*, which Senator Watters sponsored on the Department's behalf.

At this time, Commissioner S. Price moved to oppose HB-650-FN, *relative to prohibiting the suspension of driver's licenses due to nonpayment of fines or fees*, and Commissioner M. Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:** Commission professional development, education & policy recommendations related to Commission conduct & activities.

**Commissioner Caveney, Chair;** Commissioners: Lachance & Temple.  
**Staff member:** Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner J. Caveney reported that the committee has not met.

**SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Agency funding, development & oversight of strategic plan.

**Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair;** Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa, Hodgson & Stohl.  
**Staff member:** Scott Mason.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that he collected the last of the stakeholder responses today and that the committee would be meeting on August 10, 2023 to review them. He reported that he would group the responses by question.

**RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE:** Policy recommendations related to agency infrastructure; including facilities, public access, habitat & wildlife.

**Commissioner Lachance, Chair;** Commissioners: Temple, Caveney & DeRosa.  
**Staff member:** Dianne Timmins.

Commissioner B. Temple reported that the committee has not met and welcomed Commissioner M. Lachance as the new Chair of that committee.

Commissioner B. Temple spoke to the frustration over the department still not having boat access on Lake Sunapee. He inquired if somehow improvements to the Sunapee State Beach would make it a viable option.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION:** Engagement, partnership, awards, public recognition & education strategies for the public & interest groups.

**Commissioner DeRosa Chair;** Commissioners: DeBow, Hodgdon & Price.  
**Staff members:** Dan Bergeron, Kevin Jordan & Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa reported that the committee has not met.

**LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Price.  
Commissioner S. Price reported that the committee has not met.

**NH RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hodgdon.  
Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that the committee has not met.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner J. Caveney inquired if Law Enforcement puts out a list of arrests, fines & violations that occur. He reported that some of the well-behaved constituents are inquiring, as they feel it should be public knowledge and may encourage others to adhere to the rules & regulations.

Colonel Jordan responded that there is not a list compiled, however, records most likely exist if courts are involved. He further reported that he finds posting information like that just creates negativity, which results in poor feedback toward the Department.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:** Commissioners will report on their recent activities as it relates to Fish & Game Commission duties and responsibilities. This is an informational item only.

Commissioner J. Titone reported that over the last few weeks he has received concerns from saltwater anglers regarding the New York clam dredge that is operating off shore of Hampton Beach. He reported that there has been a great deal of email traffic between the Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries, the Fish & Game Department & NH Commercial Fishermen's Association regarding conflicts between lobstermen and the clam dredge. He reported that the clamming efforts have increased over the last few weeks and the concerns are over the potential damage to habitat and marine species, with particular concern for lobster.

Geno Marconi, Chairman, Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries and Director of the Port Authority, confirmed that there was concern over the clam dredge operating off the shore of Hampton Beach. Geno reported that he and the Chief of the Marine Fisheries Division, Cheri Patterson, had discussions with the owner of the dredge and discussed what a potential season would look like, discussed gear conflict issues, and what biological issues there may be relative to effects of the spawning season, etc.

He further reported that he and Cheri would report the notes & highlights from that discussion to the Marine Advisory Committee. He reported that clams are being taken in areas that are close to the fishery, for use as bait for party boats, not for food. The Marine Advisory Committee has not taken a stand on this issue, as at the last meeting they felt they did not have enough information on it, therefore, there is no recommendation at this time.

In closing, Geno reported that the conversations he has had with these people were very professional, and they repeatedly stated that they do not want any conflicts with people or have any gear conflicts with anyone.

Commissioner M. Hodgson asked what the requirements were for them to be here/fish here.

Cheri responded that they would be required to have a commercial saltwater fishing license to harvest and sell. She reported that the fishery has occurred here since the mid 1990's and that it was not unusual for the vessel to be here. She reported that they dredge for a period of time, leave when the population becomes sparse, and return five years later once populations have rebuilt and then harvest again. She further reported that it was her understanding that there has been no conflict between lobster gear that has been placed; however, they have dredged up some derelict gear, but no active gear.

Commissioner S. Price reported that she attended the Winnepesaukee Sportsmen's Meeting. She reported that The Squam Lakes Science Center brought a possum and talked about the myth that possums control the tick population. She directed them to a 2021 in-depth study

that reveals that is not true. The comprehensive study concluded that possum groom ticks off themselves, however, do not consume them.

In addition, she announced that the department received approximately \$9.3 million dollars in grants from the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service, used to conserve 18 properties and a total of 12,000 acres over the last seven years. She thanked Jim Oehler, Habitat Program Supervisor, for sharing that information with the Commission.

She announced that she received a 35 year Anniversary Sticker from the department for donating to the nongame program and encouraged everyone to donate to the program.

Commissioner B. Temple reported that he has received calls regarding the cancellation of the Winnepesaukee Fishing Derby.

Dianne Timmins, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, responded that due to the continual decline in adult salmon in Lake Winnepesaukee, the department is being proactive in the attempt to restore adult populations prior to issuing future derby permits, as well as cancelling the department's educational Salmon Sunday.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Mason reported that the four unfunded Conservation Officer positions were included back into the budget and the Department now has 48 Conservation Officers.

He reported that he participated in RAWA (Recovering America's Wildlife Act) Teams Meetings with Mike Marchand, Nongame Supervisor, along with other allies & non-governmental organizations, who support RAWA.

He reported that he spent yesterday, July 17 2023, in Coos County, with Lt. Ober, touring ATV trails.

#### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Jean Slepian, Stoddard, NH – She stated that one of the core tenants in the Strategic Plan Survey involves recruitment and states that it's imperative to continue to recruit hunters, trappers and anglers. It also states that it is equally important to recruit people with a high conservation ethic. She inquired if this signals a change in policy for the department & Commission, as the last 15 years the department has opposed representation for people who have a deeply held conservation ethic. She stated, "If so, and we do see legislation in 2024, would the Commission support the expansion of representation on the Commission?"

Commissioner C. Hodgdon responded that the Strategic planning process was underway and suggested that she complete the survey and see how that document comes together.

Kristine Snyder, Chester, NH – She referred to Commissioner Price's report regarding possum not eating ticks. She stated that she knew once people saw that survey that they would think possums are worthless for not eating ticks. She reported that she did further research and contacted the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies relative to the study's validity, and they

responded that they disagreed with the 2021 study and sent her documentation such as stats, graphs and percentages that prove otherwise.

She further reported that the New House Wildlife Rescue, Chelmsford, MA, Facebook page has 124,000 followers, and the NH Fish & Game Department has 104,000 followers. She reported that they rescued a mink and posted the story on their website. She stated that the posting stated, “Who in their right mind would kill 50 animals to make one coat?” She stated that she was trying to give the Commission an idea as to what the general population feels about fur and trapping.

Linda Dionne, Raymond, NH – reminded everyone that you do not need to hunt, trap or fish to contribute to the Nongame Program.

At this time, 3:10 p.m., Commissioner R. Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner S. Price seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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Eric Stohl, Chairman  
NH Fish & Game Commission